**2007-2008 Interim Report to
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

*Building Collections, Building Services, and Building Sustainability II:
A Collaborative Model for the HBCU Library Alliance*

**Cornell University Library
Public Services and Assessment
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Introduction

In March 2007, the Cornell University Library (CUL), on behalf of and in collaboration with the HBCU Library Alliance, was awarded a grant by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to continue activities associated with building a cadre of HBCU librarians trained in digital image production. This report summarizes the activities during the first year of the new project which began on April 1, 2007.

The following major activities marked Phase two of the CUL-HBCU Digitization Initiative.
- Preparing subcontracts to CUL's partners: the Robert W. Woodruff Library and SOLINET.
- Training thirteen HBCU library staff.
- Releasing and promoting *A Digital Collection Celebrating the Founding of the Historically Black College and University* containing 1,500 digital images and metadata produced by HBCU library staff and growing
- Completing site visits to a total of 19 HBCUs (10 from phase one and 9 from phase two)
- Adding a project partner – Lincoln University in Pennsylvania

Outcomes

- **Selected ten new HBCUs:** In April 2007 the HBCU Library Alliance selected ten new HBCUs to participate in the continuation effort. Libraries were selected based on the criteria we developed in the initial project phase. Institutions were selected based upon the following:
  - A combination of institutional commitment to the project,
  - The richness of their holdings that speak to the legacy of HBCUs previous participation in the HBCU Archives Institute
  - Geographical and institutional diversity.
  The institutions selected were:
  - Lincoln University – Missouri
  - Miles College
  - Morehouse School of Medicine
  - North Carolina Central University
  - Paine College
  - Saint Augustine's College
  - South Carolina State University
  - Southern University at Shreveport
  - Texas Southern University
  - University of the District of Columbia.

- **Installed equipment and software:** In May, Project Manager Ira Revels and Primary Investigator Peter Hirtle met with staff from the CUL Information Technology (IT) Department to arrange computer support with Cornell's

Information Technologies OnSite Solutions team for equipment that was used for the project. CUL's IT Department staff placed orders for the computers and scanners and CIT's OnSite Solutions staff picked them up at the Library. They installed project software on the hard drives and created a workbook that contained important information about the computer set-up for each of the participating libraries. After OnSite Solutions completed the equipment set-up, CUL Shipping and Receiving mailed the computers and scanners to the Georgia Archives. Georgia Archives staff Adam Parnell and Anne Smith received the equipment and stored it in a secure location until set-up for the workshop began in July. Several days prior to the workshop, Mr. Parnell, Miss Smith, and LAN Engineer Loeghman Nejad assisted Miss Revels with the set-up of the computers, scanners, and the training room.

- **Trained new HBCU library staff in digital imaging:** On 31 July 2007 through 3 August 2007 Cornell staff taught a four-day workshop on scanning techniques, metadata creation, and digital project management to HBCU library staff. Representatives from the ten new partner institutions participated in the training. The grant covered expenses for one person to attend the training from each partner institution. Perhaps a testament to the importance of the workshop to the project partners, three institutions sent an additional staff member at the expense of the home institution. As part of an effort to prepare the HBCU Library Alliance to deliver future training, two HBCU library staff from the previous year's workshop – Gail McClenney and Cedric Davis – returned to the Georgia Archives and taught sessions.

The workshop began with a reception on 30 July in which Miss Revels, Peter Hirtle, and Lillian Lewis discussed the activities for the week and other logistics. On Tuesday, Mr. Hirtle kicked off the first part of the workshop with lectures on image quality and benchmarking and legal considerations. Revels led a session on selection considerations. After lunch we went on a tour of the Georgia Archives. After the tour, Hirtle and Revels led a hands-on session where trainees benchmarked using a hand-out, calculator, eye loupe, and ruler's image resolution analog photographs and text documents. On Wednesday morning, Miss Revels and Mr. Davis led a lecture on technology considerations for digitization projects. Mr. Davis described workflow and security measures in place at Alabama State University to ensure the safe handling of archival assets during the production process. During Wednesday afternoon, Miss Revels led workshop participants in hands-on labs using the computer and scanner. Workshop participants learned how to scan photographs, printed text documents, and manuscripts.

On Thursday, Miss McClenney led a nearly day-long workshop on setting up the CONTENTdm Acquisition Station and adding images to the server, which she administers at the Robert W. Woodruff Library. On Thursday afternoon, Mr. Hirtle, Mr. Davis, and Miss McClenney led a discussion on what staff should do once they returned to their home institutions. On Friday, the final day of the workshop, Miss Revels and Lillian Lewis, HBCU Library Alliance Program

Officer led a session in which workshop participants discussed the state, regional, and national conferences they were interested in attending in order to disseminate information about the project. Several participants agreed that they were willing to share information about the project during professional meetings and conferences.

- **Managed first and second phase partners:** In August Miss Revels disseminated a letter to partners. The letter presented partners with an update on recent project activities and outlined what would happen over the six month period from August through December. One key element of managing the project during Phase Two has been the use of memoranda of understanding (MOU) instead of formal subcontracts with the project partners. In the MOU's, HBCUs agree to report the number of hours worked by scanning technician, the number of hours worked by library and IT staff beyond the project liaison, and other outputs such as the number of images that have been scanned. CUL chose to use the MOU instead of subcontracts because of the numerous challenges associated with understanding the administrative complexities at partner HBCUs and the challenge to CU Accounting and the burden on its Office Sponsored Research during Phase One. At this time, CUL can report that all of the contracts are in place for both the current and previous project partners. Scanning technicians have been hired at most libraries and are working.

- **Added a new project partner:** One objective during Phase Two was the addition of new partners, which included libraries that have the ability to contribute digital images to the HBCU digital collection. This approach is key to the HBCU Library Alliance's goal of increasing the number of images and metadata in the collection. It also serves as a means to develop a procedure for how libraries might contribute historic documents which have been previously scanned. In February the Archivist at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania asked Miss Revels if Lincoln University would be allowed to contribute images to the HBCU digital collection that it had previously digitized. Miss Revels forwarded the request to the HBCU Library Alliance Committee on Digitization who promptly responded affirming their support. After a series of email and phone discussions with the Library Director, Archivist Susan Peavar, and CONTENTdm database administrator, Gail McClenney Lincoln's digital images were added to the collection in April.

- **Released the HBCU Digital Collection:** A key objective of the second phase was met on 14 February 2008 with the release of the HBCU Digital Collection – *A Digital Collection Celebrating the Founding of the Historically Black College and University*, which can be found at http://hbcudigitallibrary.auctr.edu.

  A key element to prepare for the release was the revision of descriptive metadata contributed by the first ten project partners. To assist partner libraries in creating metadata of comparable quality, Miss Revels worked closely with the HBCU

Library Alliance Committee on Digitization.[1] Specifically, Revels worked closely with committee member Dr. Weatherington to develop a standard metadata template that provided guidance to project staff at the partner libraries. Prior to the release of the collection, Revels received advice from Geri Ingram, a Customer Services Manager for OCLC Digital Collection Services. Miss Ingram's knowledge of CONTENTdm was an asset as we sought ways to test searching and discovery of the HBCU digital objects. Of particular importance was the ability of the project partners to edit their descriptive entries in a timely fashion. They accomplished this task with ease and the collection was able to be released in a timely manner.

Another concern during the planning of the collection release which began in late September was the dissemination and promotion of the collection in professional publications and to a general audience.

- **Disseminated results:** CUL project staff and the HBCU Library Alliance have been diligently promoting for the CUL-HBCU Digitization Initiative. Promotional activities have resulted in the following outcomes:
  - Promoting the new grant project award in a press release, which can be found at [http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/May07/CUL-HBCU.cp.html]?
  - Promoting the HBCU Digital Collection, which can be found at: [http://hbculibraries.org/docs/Digital-collection.pdf]?
  - Printing and sharing 1,500 printed brochures with all project partners. The brochures were designed by CUL Design Staff from the Department of Communications in collaboration with the Committee on Digitization.
  - Conducting two radio interviews – one on a regional morning talk show and another on satellite radio. The first radio interview was held in February shortly after the release of the digital collection. Ira Revels participated in an interview on the radio show "Eyes Open with Tony Brown", which is broadcast on 88.1 in Alexandria, Louisiana. Elizabeth Gail McClenney, Deputy Director of the Woodruff Library and CONTENTdm Database Administrator participated in the satellite radio interview on the American Urban Radio Network in April.

Besides radio interviews and press releases, Revels and Dr. Janice Franklin were invited to participate in the Connecting to Collections Conference in Denver, which will take place on June 24-25. After she departs from the Denver Conference, Revels is one of twenty people selected by the American Library Association (ALA) to deliver a paper on the CUL-HBCU Digitization Initiative during the upcoming ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA. Additionally,

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[1] The HBCU Library Alliance Committee on Digitization is chaired by Janice Franklin, Ph.D., who is a co-founder of the HBCU Library Alliance and Dean of the Learning Resources Center at Alabama State University. The Committee includes Loretta Parham, a co-founder of the HBCU Library Alliance, Chairperson of the HBCU Library Alliance, and CEO/Director of the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center and Elsie Weatherington, Ph.D. Dean of the Virginia State University Library.

Revels was selected to deliver a presentation at the Diversity in Libraries Conference in October 2008, which is being held in conjunction with the Kentucky State Library Conference. Revels has submitted a presentation proposal for the upcoming Association of Colleges and Research Libraries Conference in Seattle, Washington.

- **Conducted site visits:** In August, Revels began conducting site visits at the ten new participating institutions. The purpose of the site visits was to get workflow support, project advice to library and IT staff, and to review the quality of scanned images and metadata created for the project. Where needed, the visits entailed day-long training sessions. Ms. Revels met with a variety of individuals including, the library directors, catalogers, scanning technicians, IT staff, and archivists. During her most recent site visit to South Carolina State University, Miss Revels and project staff videotaped their activities. The videotape will be useful as a tool to refresh partners training.

HBCU partners report

In a recent production survey issued to project partners perhaps the most salient comments were about the issues they faced finding and hiring scanning technicians. According to project partners, they found it most difficult to hire scanning technicians, which impacted their ability to begin scanning sooner. The project partners explained problems hiring a scanning technician from general terms "we were late hiring a scanning technician" to the specific:

> "The challenges include those common to all the participating institutions, which would include finding people with the required skills and background to serve as the scanning technician. The salary is relatively low for this area of the country."
> - CUL-HBCU Digitization Initiative Library Project Partner

One partner described the challenge of balancing Digitization Initiative deliverables with traditional service delivery and several other projects in the Archives and Special Collections Department. She wrote,

> "We faired very well with student scanning technicians. We were able to find experienced students with a passion for technology and history who were thorough and detailed. The biggest challenge was not having full-time staff who worked solely on the digitization project. Our full-time staff members who did contribute to the collection had to balance scanning, hiring, training, and editing for this project along with several other projects…It is recommended that the institutions train staff who are dedicated only to this project until it is complete."
> - CUL-HBCU Digitization Initiative Library Project Partner

Although partners weathered challenges in the production of digital content, each has selected archival materials for the project and created a total of 1,653 digital images since September 2007. CUL project staff attributes these results to the project staff at partner

libraries taking on the additional work of performing the scanning operation and involving additional staff in the production process. CUL Project Staff will monitor this issue especially as it may indicate a need for us to work more closely with HBCU partners in redefining their expected outputs and improving the quality of the overall results of their contributions.

The partners also discussed how staff plans to measure success. They will use numerous techniques, such as:

- Surveying faculty, students, and researchers who use the collection.
- Counting the number of times the collection is accessed using the report function in CONTENTdm.
- Recording comments from campus administrators and feedback from project partners.

Next Steps

Looking forward to 2008 - 2009, Cornell staff will work with the new HBCU Library Alliance Program Director Sandra Phoenix, the half-time HBCU Library Alliance project administrative assistant, and CUL staff to coordinate a spring workshop that will explore advanced issues in digitization, to include skills-improvement sessions on the following:

- Digital audio and video techniques,
- Copyright for digital a/v collections,
- Preservation and shareable metadata
- Action planning for digitization centers

The workshop will be held in Ithaca, New York on the Cornell University campus. Instructors from the Cornell Academic Technologies Center and the Library Department of Metadata Services will lead the workshop. The workshop will include tours and hands-on activities involving streaming audio and video and importing a/v media into CONTENTdm. Participating libraries are partners from the first set of ten HBCU institutions and include:

- Alabama State University
- Fisk University
- Southern University – Baton Rouge
- Tuskegee University
- Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center
- Virginia State University

The application process ensures that all libraries meet a minimum set of criteria pertaining to audio and video materials and submit a signed letter of support from their university president, chancellor, or provost. Institutions that have been selected to

participate will receive a high-end multimedia computer and a/v software for the purposes of developing and promoting access to their digital a/v resources. Finally, the project partners will explore the creation of digitization centers at some of our project partner institutions to digitize paper-based, audio, and video materials for HBCU libraries (that are for various reasons) unable to do so on their own.

Later in the fall, a subset of five library deans, the database administrator, and the HBCU Library Alliance Program Officer that comprise the new seven-member project advisory committee will meet in Ithaca, New York. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the plans for ensuring the project's continued success. The Committee continues to make policy decisions and offer guidance on the meaningful engagement of project staff. The Committee is responsible for steering the activities involved in business and sustainability planning, HBCU Library Alliance Digital Initiatives, and the digital collection. It meets regularly by phone.